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ABSTRACT

The study provides evidence of a broad range of difference in child-rearing practices among 47 Chicanas, living in a midwestern city of approximately 250,000, during a structured teaching task with their kindergarten-aged children. Maternal behaviors were observed/measured during two 5-minute observations of a mother teaching her child to make a replica of a Tinkertoy robot and an airplane. The predominant patterns of child-rearing practices observed were authoritative (49%) and authoritarian (47%). The authoritative patterns of child-rearing practices used were inquiry, directives, praise, and physical affection. The order of the most frequent behavior observed in the authoritarian mothers was directive, modeling, visual cues, and positive physical control. Permissive mothers used praise, inquiry, physical affection, visual cues, respectively. The authoritative style of parenting is associated with competitive and individualistic middle-class Anglo-American values which are considered antagonistic to communal/cooperative values of Mexican Americans. Being exposed to non-formal means of parent education through the media or community resources, being three or more generations removed from Mexico, being fluent in English, and being residents in predominantly Anglo neighborhoods may explain the authoritative responses of study participants. (NEC)

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MATERNAL CHILD-REARING PRACTICES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD BEHAVIOR IN MEXICAN-AMERICAN/CHICANO FAMILIES

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MATERNAL CHILD-REARING PRACTICES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD BEHAVIOR IN MEXICAN-AMERICAN/CHICANO FAMILIES

The principal task of parents is to rear children from dependent infants to young adults capable of functioning independently in society. Much of human development is a consequence of the manner by which this is accomplished. Studies in child development suggest evidence of cultural and ethnic diversity along various dimensions of child-rearing (Baumrind, 1971, 1975; Hess, 1970, 1972; Lindholm & Padilla, 1981; Mussen, Conger, & Kagan, 1974; Strommen, McKinney, & Fitzgerald, 1983). Most of the research on the topic, however, has been conducted using middle-class White or lower-class Black populations with relatively little attention given to other cultural or ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the need for research on child-rearing in Chicano families is well documented (Durrett, O'Bryant, & Pennebaker, 1975; Griswold, 1975; LeVine & Bartz, 1979; Lindholm & Padilla, 1981; Parra & Henderson, 1982.

The few studies on child-rearing in Mexican-American families that can be considered empirical or verifiable fail to provide consistent conclusions about the child-rearing attitudes and practices. For example, Durrett, O'Bryant and Pennebaker (1975) and LeVine and Bartz (1979) conclude that permissiveness characterizes the child-rearing of Mexican-American parents. The findings of other studies, however, suggest that traditional values and authoritarian structures are more characteristic of Mexican-American child rearing (Kagan & Ender, 1975; Kearns, 1970).

Although lacking sufficient empirical research, the literature is replete with anecdotal and nonempirical descriptions of interaction in Mexican-American families and socialization of their children. Descriptions, some of which are written by Mexican-Americans (Alvirez, Bean, & Williams, 1982; Delgado, 1980; Mirande, 1980; Mirande & Enriquez, 1979; Staton, 1972; Vigil 1980), characterize child-rearing in

Mexican-American families as warm, nurturing, and affectionate within a patriarchal, authoritarian family structure with its traditional respect for males and the elderly.

The purpose of this paper is to present research findings on Mexican-American maternal child-rearing practices and the relationship of such practices to child behavior. Only the maternal role was examined since the mother continues to be the primary agent in carrying out the expressive role with children in many families (Bigner, 1979).

Method

Subjects

The subjects were 47 Chicanas and their kindergarten-aged children living in a midwestern city of approximately 250,000. A nonprobability, purposive sample was selected because of the impossibility of random sampling. Snowball sampling was also used. Names, telephone numbers, and addresses of potential subjects were obtained from community organizations. Potential subjects were contacted by telephone or in person to request their participation in the study.

Of the 47 mother-child dyads, 4 (8.5 percent) spoke only Spanish, 7 (14.9 percent) spoke only English, and 36 (76.6 percent) spoke both English and Spanish to each other and to the researcher. Eleven percent of the mothers were born in Mexico (first generation), 26 percent were second generation, 40 percent were third generation, and 23 percent were four or more generations removed from Mexico. The families of 57 percent of the subjects lived in predominantly Anglo neighborhoods, 27.6 percent in ethnically mixed neighborhoods, 10.6 percent in predominantly Mexican-American neighboorhoods, and 2 percent in predominantly Black neighborhoods. Seventy percent of the families were Catholic; the remainder were Protestant. The average number of children per family was 3.4 with ages ranging from infancy to 26 years. The age range of the mothers was 22 to 47 years with both mean

and median ages of 30 years. The mean age of the 47 children (28 girls and 19 boys) in the study was 5 years, four months. Eighty-one percent of the mothers were married, 9 percent were divorced, 2 percent were separated, and 8 percent were never married of whom 4 percent were cohabitating. Most (62 percent) of the mothers were not employed outside their homes; 1 (2 percent) was a proprietor of a fast food business; 4 (8.5 percent) were clerical workers; 4 (8.5 percent) were semi-skilled workers, and 7 (14.9 percent) were unskilled workers; the remaining 4 (8.5 percent) were students. The mean educational level was tenth grade for mothers and eighth grade for fathers. Their years of formal education ranged from 0 to 14 years for mothers and 0 to 16 for fathers. The majority of the fathers were semi-skilled (17), and skilled (7) laborers; 2 were unskilled laborers, 1 was a clergyman, and 2 were students. Of the 40 fathers, 11 (27.5 percent) were unemployed.

Procedures

Data were collected in the homes of the subjects with the assumption that maternal-child interaction occurs most naturally in the home environment. All procedures were conducted in the subjects' preferred language by the researcher, who was the sole observer. Child-rearing practices and child behavior were measured through observations of mother-child dyads during two structured teaching tasks in which the mother was asked to teach the child how to make a replica of a Tinkertoy model.

Instruments

The Maternal Teaching Observation Technique (MTOT).

The MTOT, developed in English and Spanish versions by Laosa (1980a, 1980c), was utilized as a means by which to measure observed maternal behaviors. Forms A and B of the technique are two five-minute observations of a mother teaching her child to first make a replica of a Tinkertoy robot (Form A) and about ten minutes

later of an airplane (Form B). The behavioral measures on the instrument are: (1) Inquiry, (2) Directive, (3) Praise, (4) Negative Verbal Feedback, (5) Modeling, (6) Visual Cue, (7) Physical Affection, (8) Positive Physical Control, and (9) Negative Physical Control. Slight modifications were made to the MTOT by expanding the definitions of four of the categories to include visual behaviors. This was done in the interest of measuring as many observed behaviors as possible.

Baumrind's (1966,1971,1978) theoretical model was then employed to rank the MTOT measures according to their expected frequency of occurrence in permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian patterns of child-rearing practices. The prototypic characteristics of each child-rearing pattern as defined by Baumrind (1966,1971,1978) were used in the study. The permissive parent is acceptant of a child's impulses and actions and uses no form of punishment. Some permissive parents are protective and loving, while others offer freedom thereby evading responsibility for the child's development. Authoritative parents, on the other hand, are democratic and use reasoning to guide the child in a rational, issue-oriented manner. This parent exerts firm control to inculcate autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity. The more traditional, authoritarian parent inculcates values such as respect for authority, respect for work and respect for the preservation of order by using punitive, forceful measures to curb a child's self-will.

Child Behavior During Maternal Teaching Observation Technique (CBDMTOT).

The CBDMTOT was developed by the researcher for measuring the child's behavior during administration of the MTOT. Its objective was to measure child behaviors concurrently with maternal behaviors during the MTOT structured teaching tasks. When the MTOT was pilot tested with five mother-child dyads to measure child behaviors during the teaching tasks, eight behavioral categories were found. The eight behavioral measures on the instrument are: (1) Positive Verbal Response, (2) Negative

Verbal Response, (3) Inquiry of Mother, (4) Physical Response, (5) Imitation of Mother (6) Task Involvement, (7) Noncompliance, and (8) No Response. Frequency counts for each measure were recorded on the protocol used to record mother and child behavioral measures. The child behavior measures were used to further analyze patterns of maternal child-rearing practices.

Reliability and Validity

To insure consistency in data collection, the researcher trained herself to observe and record mother and child behaviors by repeatedly viewing video tapes of similar parent-child interactions. Observer reliabiltity of .98 on the simultaneous use of the MTOT and CBDMOT was established with an early childhood development educator and researcher who observed several video taped interactions with the researcher.

Although the Maternal Teaching Observation Technique (MTOT) was originally developed to measure maternal teaching strategies, in this research it was also considered a valid measure of child-rearing practices during a teaching task. An assumption underlying Laosa's (1980c) development of the MTOT is that a mother's behavior in an observed structured situtation is representative of her teaching behavior during everyday situations in which she might teach her child similar tasks. Research evidence for this type of validity was found by Stallings and Porter (1981) as a result of their observations during a large-scale, government-supported study of day care homes. The structured observation was, therefore, considered a valid technique for measuring child-rearing practices during a maternal teaching task, particularly since the observation took place in the familiar home environment.

External validity was insured as much as possible by administering the structured observation prior to conducting an interview survey of child-rearing attitudes. Thus, the potential effects of an interview about child-rearing on maternal

behaviors during the structured observations were controlled.

Concurrent validity was established between the Child Behavior During Maternal MTOT (CBDMTOT) and MTOT. The set of variables developed by the researcher for measuring child behaviors during administration of the MTOT was found to be related significantly (.80) to the set of maternal behavior variables on the MTOT. The observations of the mother-child dyads could, therefore, be measured concurrently; and scores on one instrument can be expected to predict scores on the other instrument.

Results

The patterns of child-rearing practices the mothers were observed to use during administration of the MTOT's two forms were determined. The t test for paired samples, used to evaluate the differences between the effects of Forms A and B, revealed the paired observations were not significant. Forms A and B were, therefore, combined; and the variable measures for each subject were rank ordered. Chi-square goodness of fit was computed between the observed variable ranks on the MTOT and the a priori ranks determined by employing Baumrind's (1966,1971,1978) theoretical model to rank the measures according to their expected frequency of occurrence in permissive, authoritative, and authoritarian patterns of child-rearing practices. A percentage distribution of the three patterns of child-rearing practices indicated that they were almost equally divided into authoritative (49 percent) and authoritarian (47 percent) patterns with only 4 percent of the mothers using permissive child-rearing practices.

Univariate Analysis variance results for each of the child behavior variables revealed significant effects of patterns of child-rearing practices on the child behavior variable, Imitation of Mother, $F(1,43)=5.08$, $p=.03$(Table 1). Significance in one of the eight child behavior variables was not considered sufficient to conclude that there was

Table 1 --Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Child Behavior with Authoritative and Authoritarian Maternal Child-Rearing Practices.

Child Behaviors	Child-Rearing Practices Authoritative vs. Authoritarian	
	F	P
Behaviors as a Group	1.46	.21
Positive Verbal Response	.77	.39
Negative Verbal Response	.19	.66
Questions	.32	.58
Physically Responds	.59	.45
Imitates Mother	5.08	.03*
Task	1.56	.22
Noncompliance	1.08	.30
No Response		

*Significance level: $p < .05$

a significant relationship between observed patterns of maternal child-rearing practices and child behaviors. There were significant relationships, however, between correlations of pairs of observed maternal and child behavior variables. Table 2 presents Pearson product-moment correlations for observed maternal and child behaviors during the teaching task. There were statistically significant linear relationships between the following pairs of behavior variables:

1. The more directives a mother issued, the less a child initiated or became absorbed in the task.

2. The more a mother praised her child, the more the child questioned the mother.

3. The more a mother praised her child, the more the child initiated or became absorbed in the task.

4. The more a mother praised her child, the more the child responded to the mother.

5. The more a mother modeled the task for her child, the more the child failed to respond to the mother.

6. The more visual cues a mother gave the child, the more the child responded to the mother.

7. As the mother's positive physical control increased, the child's positive verbal responses increased.

8. As the mother's positive physical control increased, the child's physical responses decreased.

9. As the mother's positive physical control increased, the child's frequency of initiating or being absorbed in the task increased.

Table 2 --Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Observed Maternal and Child Behavior Variables.

Maternal Variables	Child Variables							
	Positive Verbal Response	Negative Verbal Response	Inquiry of Mother	Physical Response	Imitation of Mother	Task Involvement	Noncompliance	No Response
Inquiry	r=-.0928 p= .267	r=-.0391 p= .397	r=-.2178 p= .071	r= .0737 p= .311	r=-.1298 p= .192	r= .1960 p= .093	r= .0018 p= .495	r= .0790 p= .299
Directive	r= .0890 p= .276	r= .0700 p= .320	r=-.0482 p= .374	r= .1495 p= .158	r= .1421 p= .170	r=-.4103 p= .002**	r= .1095 p= .232	r=-.0995 p= .253
Praise	r=-.0841 p= .287	r=-.1340 p= .185	r= .4076 p= .002**	r=-.1419 p= .171	r=-.0598 p= .345	r= .2769 p= .030*	r=-.1732 p= .122	r=-.3283 p= .012 **
Negative Verbal Feedback	r= .0551 p= .357	r= .2005 p= .088	r= .1606 p= .140	r=-.0184 p= .451	r= .0270 p= .429	r=-.1942 p= .095	r= .1128 p= .225	r=-.2186 p= .070
Modeling	r=-.0596 p= .345	r=-.0149 p= .460	r=-.1766 p= .118	r= .0381 p= .400	r= .0743 p= .310	r=-.0725 p= .314	r= .1675 p= .130	r= .5272 p= .001**
Visual Cue	r=-.1336 p= .185	r= .0476 p= .375	r= .2360 p= .055	r= .1356 p= .182	r= .0017 p= .495	r=-.1150 p= .221	r=-.2118 p= .077	r=-.2978 p= .021*
Physical Affection	r= .1544 p= .150	r= .0619 p= .340	r=-.0494 p= .371	r=-.2292 p= .061	r=-.1572 p= .146	r= .2004 p= .088	r= .0386 p= .398	r= .1453 p= .165
Positive Physical Control	r= .2811 p= .028*	r=-.1974 p= .092	r=-.0620 p= .340	r=-.2520 p= .044*	r=-.1098 p= .231	r= .3255 p= .013**	r=-.1220 p= .207	r=-.2939 p= .022*
Negative Physical Control	r=-.0538 p= .360	r= .2733 p= .032*	r=-.1816 p= .111	r= .0839 p= .288	r=.1181 p= .215	r=-.0919 p= .269	r=.0100 p= .473	r=-.0293 p= .423

* Significance level: $p \leq .05$
** Significance level: $p < .01$

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10. As the mother's positive physical control increased, the child's failure to respond decreased.

11. As the mother's negative physical control increased, the child's negative verbal responses increased.

Discussion

The results of this study provide evidence of the diversity in child-rearing among a sample of working-class Chicanas. The predominant patterns of maternal child-rearing practices in this study were authoritative and authoritarian. These results lend support to the findings of Parra and Henderson (1982) that Mexican-Americans have an extensive range of child guidance practices which include reasoning, positive reinforcement, and punishment. The findings are also consistent with those of Kagan and Ender (1975) that some Mexican-American mothers of lower socio-economic status tend to use authoritarian reinforcement patterns, which include punishment, in interactions with their children. On the other hand, the permissive child-rearing practices observed in only 4 percent of the mothers failed to support the findings of previous studies that permissiveness characterizes the child-rearing of Mexican-American parents (Durrett, O'Bryant, & Pennebaker, 1975; LeVine & Bartz, 1979).

Those mothers with authoritative patterns of child-rearing practices used (1) Inquiry, (2) Directives, (3) Praise, and (4) Physical Affection more frequently and in that order than other behaviors. The order of the most frequent behaviors observed in the authoritarian mothers was (1) Directives, (2) Modeling, (3) Visual Cues, and (4) Positive Physical Control. Permissive mothers used (1) Praised, (2) Inquiry, (3) Physical Affection, and (4) Visual Cues, respectively, while they taught their children to make the Tinkertoy models.

A particularly interesting finding of the study was that 49 percent of the mothers used authoritative child-rearing practices. The authoritative style of parenting is associated with competitive and individualistic middle-class Anglo-American values which are considered antagonistic to the communal and cooperative values of Mexican-Americans (Baumrind, 1978). Moreover, in Laosa's (1978,1980b) research using the Maternal Teaching Observation Technique with Chicanas, maternal behaviors varied with the mothers' educational levels. In Laosa's study, Chicanas who had completed at least an eleventh-grade education used behaviors more characteristic of authoritative parenting; and Chicanas with less than an eleventh-grade education used more authoritarian behaviors in their teaching strategies. Despite the tenth-grade mean educational level of the working-class mothers in this study, nearly one-half of them demonstrated the authoritative child-rearing pattern generally associated with higher socio-economic status. This finding may be attributed to the mothers' acculturation and to the interaction between the family systems and other systems in the environment. An environmental influence such as the number of generations removed from Mexico is a salient variable in the process of acculturation as are language preference and use, and ethnic density of a family's neighborhood. (Padilla, 1980). The mothers studied were well acculturated since most were three or more generations removed from Mexico, they spoke English fluently, and lived in predominantly Anglo neighborhoods of a medium size city in the Midwest. Another explanation for the authoritative child-rearing pattern used by nearly one-half of the mothers may be exposure to non-formal means of parent education through the media or community resources.

Observed maternal behaviors were clearly related to child behaviors. Mothers encouraged initiative in their children by limiting their directives, frequently praising the children, and by knowing when to physically guide the children through solution of

the task. Children responded more positively to mothers who expressed approval of them, attracted and maintained the childrens' attention, and physically facilitated childrens' solution of the task. Mothers who taught their children primarily by modeling failed to maintain children's attentiveness to the task. Children where also more verbally negative toward mothers who were punitive or disapproving of the children's activity.

In conclusion, the study provides evidence of a broad range of differences in child-rearing practices among Chicanas during a structured teaching task with their kindergarten-aged child. The research findings are representative of Mexican-American mothers and their kindergarten-aged children residing in a medium-sized urban area of the Midwest. Maternal child-rearing patterns and their effects on child behavior are generalizable to interaction patterns involving similar teaching tasks.

Practical applications of the study are in the areas of parent education and day care as well as other educational, health care, and social services settings. For example, parent education programs could be designed specifically for Mexican-American families with content based on empirical evidence of their child-rearing practices. In day care settings, knowledge of the care Mexican-American children receive at home can be applied to staff interactions with them and their parents. Similary, in educational institutions, empirical information about Mexican-American child-rearing practices can have practical application to improve upon teacher-child and teacher-parent interactions. Knowledge of maternal child-rearing practices and child behavior in Chicano families, including the languages spoken in the home, can also be applied by professionals serving Mexican-American children and their family members to enhance their interactions with and improve upon intervention in these families.

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